AKIRA 8™

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AKIRA

BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO

CHAPTER 8

WEAPON OF VENGEANCE

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

The year is 2030. The world is rebuilding from World War III. In **Neo-Tokyo,** plans are being made to hold the next Olympics in the "old city"—where, thirty-eight years before, the first of the bombs fell.

Kaneda and his friends, teenage delinquents, make an unauthorized motorcycle run into the old city to check out the old site. They encounter a terrified child, known only as **Number 26,** possessing extraordinary telekinetic abilities. During the encounter, the paranormal boy gravely injures **Tetsuo,** one of Kaneda's close friends. Then, he vanishes.

The next night, at **Harukiya,** a tough local dive, **Kaneda** attempts, unsuccessfully, to pick up a newcomer, **Kay.** She and her companion, **Ryu,** are part of an underground resistance group dedicated to learning what is happening in the old city and putting a stop to it.

Trouble ensues, and both delinquents and resistance fighters again encounter **Number 26.** Then the ominous **Colonel** in charge of the covert operation appears with a secret weapon—**Number 27,** a crippled paranormal child named **Masaru. Masaru** astonishes the resistance fighters by addressing **Number 26** as **Takashi. Kay** and **Ryu** had previously assumed that **Number 26** was the Colonel's ultimate weapon—the as-yet unseen paranormal giant code-named **Akira. Kaneda** is separated from the resistance fighters, but he manages to intercept and hide a pill meant for **Takashi,** who is recaptured by the Colonel's men.

Tetsuo—who following his accident was taken to a hospital by soldiers serving the **Colonel**—is taken from school by the **Colonel** after his recovery. Under the treatments of the Colonel's chief medical officer, **Tetsuo** exhibits powerful telekinetic abilities...and undergoes great pain. Finally, **Tetsuo** breaks out of the Colonel's installation, using his burgeoning powers to slaughter

all who oppose him.

Meanwhile, **Kaneda,** trying to learn what is happening to **Tetsuo,** re-encounters the members of the resistance, and is brought back to their headquarters. Questioned by **Ryu,** he denies all knowledge of the stolen drug. When soldiers enter the resistance hideout in force, **Kaneda** and **Kay** manage together to escape to **Harukiya,** where the bartender agrees to shelter them. A spy from the Colonel's organization learns of their hideout, but he is caught and left for dead by a resistance fighter.

Kiyoko, another of the psychic children under the Colonel's control, announces that **Akira**—who is asleep, and expected to remain so for some time—is going to awaken in the near future.

At **Harukiya, Yamagata** and Kaneda's other friends tell of Tetsuo's new powers and of his bloodthirstiness. **Kaneda** and **Yamagata** lead the local street gangs on an all-out attack to stop **Tetsuo.** Then the **Colonel,** alerted by his informant, arrives at **Harukiya,** and forces the bartender to tell him where the fugitives have gone.

Yamagata and his team corner **Tetsuo** in a warehouse. Most of the gang dies, and Kaneda reaches the scene in time to see **Tetsuo** brutally kill **Yamagata.** Enraged, **Kaneda** shoots **Tetsuo**...who survives.

As the **Colonel** arrives, **Tetsuo** grabs and swallows the drug **Kaneda** had hidden, apparently dying of an overdose. A few minutes later, the terrible delinquent recovers, more powerful than ever, and the elated **Colonel** rechristens him **Number 41.**

Back at the Colonel's installation, Tetsuo's body shrugs off the effects of his wounds... and his mind continues its descent into madness and evil. Eavesdropping on the **Colonel** and his doctor, he is intrigued to learn that he is not unique, and that other paranormals possess talents he lacks.

Ryu, working undercover at a construction site next to the Colonel's base, meets with **Nezu,** who publically leads the governmental opposition party but secretly is a resistance leader as well, and the pair share new evidence on the scale of the **Akira** project. **Nezu,** in turn, consults **Lady Miyako,** the head of a powerful religious cult of which **Nezu** is a member. **Lady Miyako,** who bears the **Number 19** on her hand marking her as one of the Colonel's series, warns of impending catastrophe which may be linked to **Akira.**

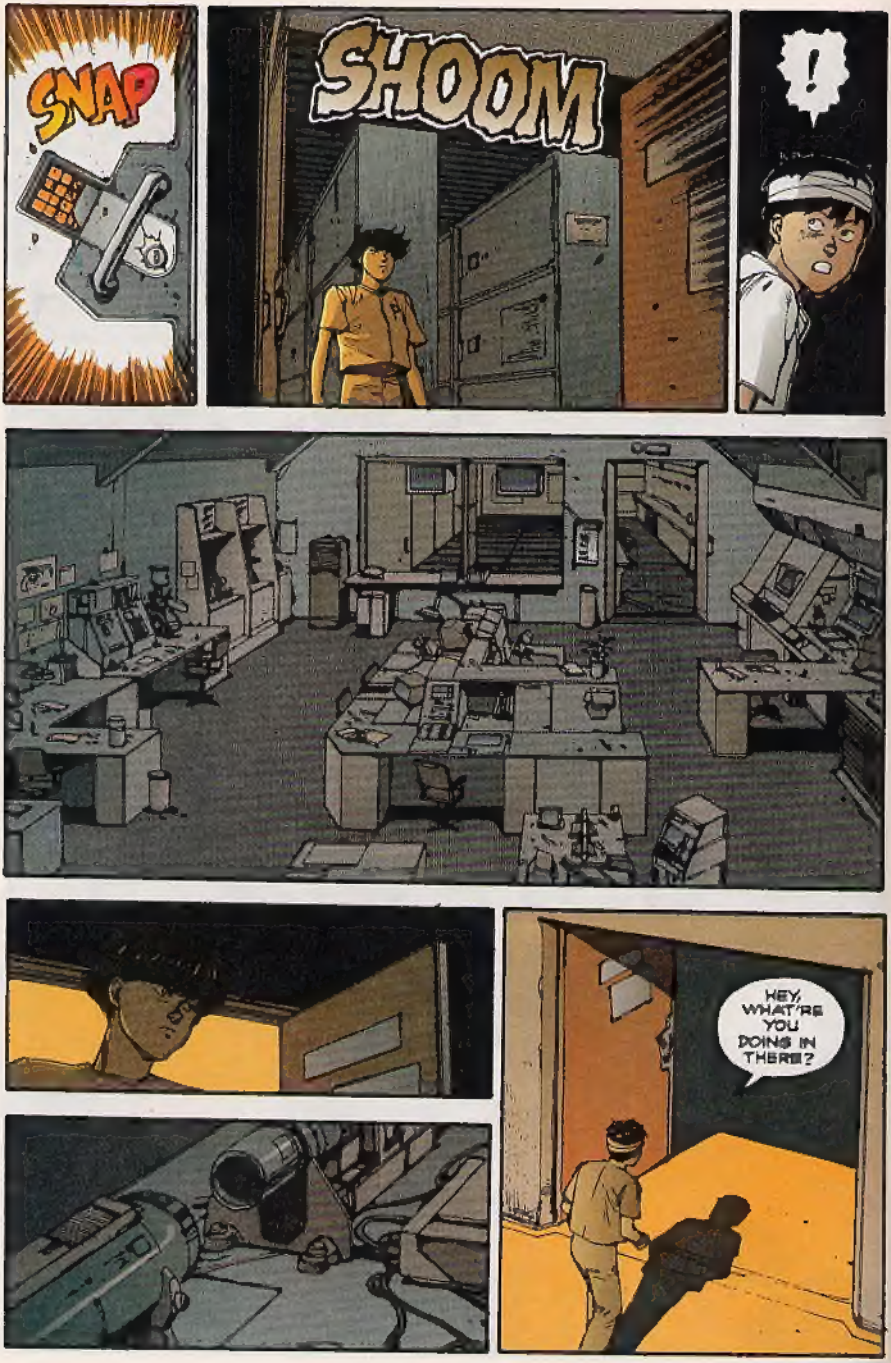
Kiyoko, Takashi, and **Masaru** fear Tetsuo's power and discuss plans to hinder him. Then **Kay**—who, like **Kaneda**—has been brought to the installation under guard, escapes, displaying a variety of psychic powers, including telekinesis and teleportation. She attacks **Tetsuo,** almost killing him, and helps **Kaneda** to shake off his guards, acting like a sleepwalker the whole time. As guards close in on the escapees, **Tetsuo** quizzes the doctor about **Akira,** and learns that his chief rival is trapped in cryogenic sleep.

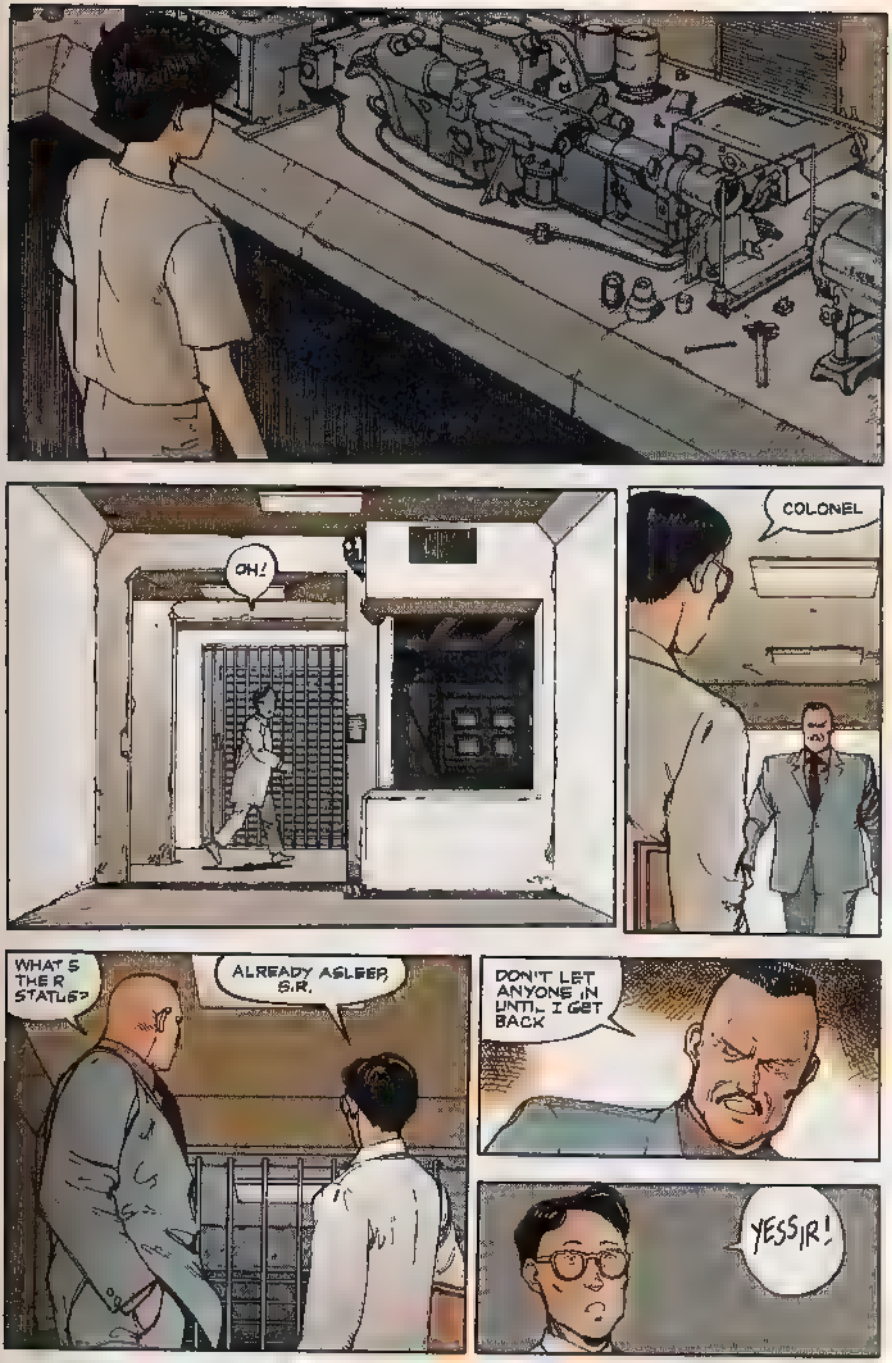
TOK
TOK
TOK
...
IS AKIRA REALLY THAT POWERFUL?
I... HAVE NO FIRSTHAND KNOWLEDGE OF HIM.
MY INFORMATION IS FROM THE FILES OF THE SCIENTISTS WHO DEVELOPED HIM...

...OVER THIRTY YEARS AGO.
Whoosh
YOU MEAN... AKIRA'S BEEN SLEEPING SINCE BEFORE WORLD WAR THREE?
IN A MANNER OF SPEAKING, YES.
WHAT ABOUT OTHERS... BESIDES AKIRA AND ME?
HHhmmm
THERE ARE A FEW.
YOU'LL BE MEETING THEM SOON.
THEY'RE KIDS... AREN'T THEY?
WHAT?!

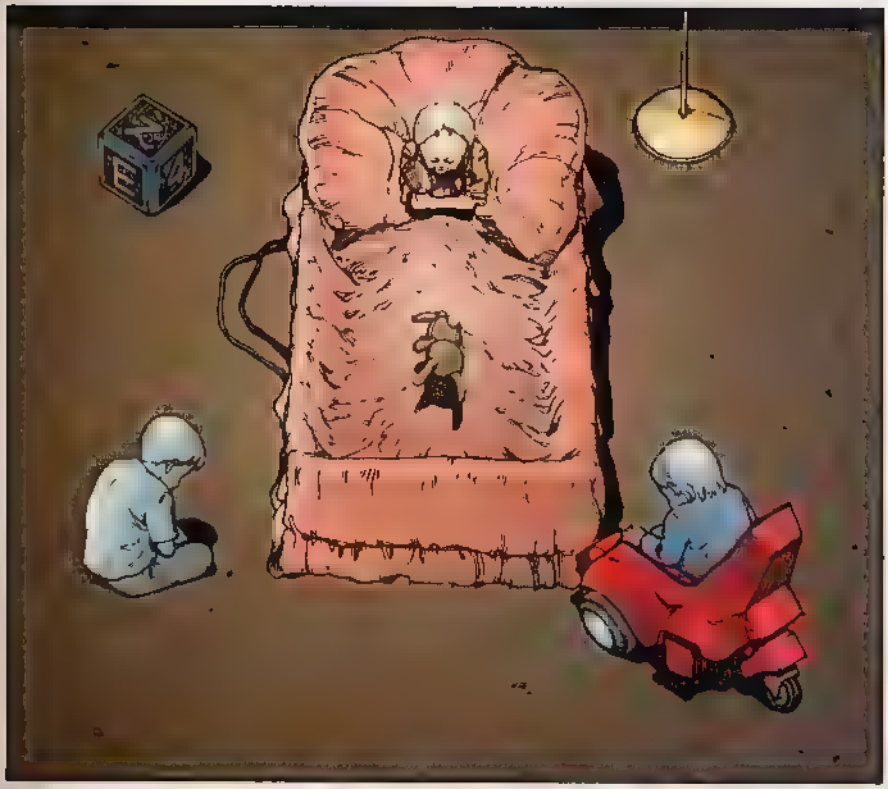
EH...?
YOU...YOU COULDN'T POSSIBLY KNOW THAT! NOT...NOT UNLESS...
YOU CAN READ MY MIND!
IT'S LIKE I CAN SEE THOSE KIDS RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME.
SHOOM
BU-
THAK THAK THAK
B-BUT--?!
THAK THAK

THIS IS THE ARMORY!
HOW'D I GET IN HERE?
WUHHH...
...KAY?
YOO-HOO! KA-A-AY!
UH...
KA-A-AAY!!!
DEVELOPMENTAL RESEARCH
AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY

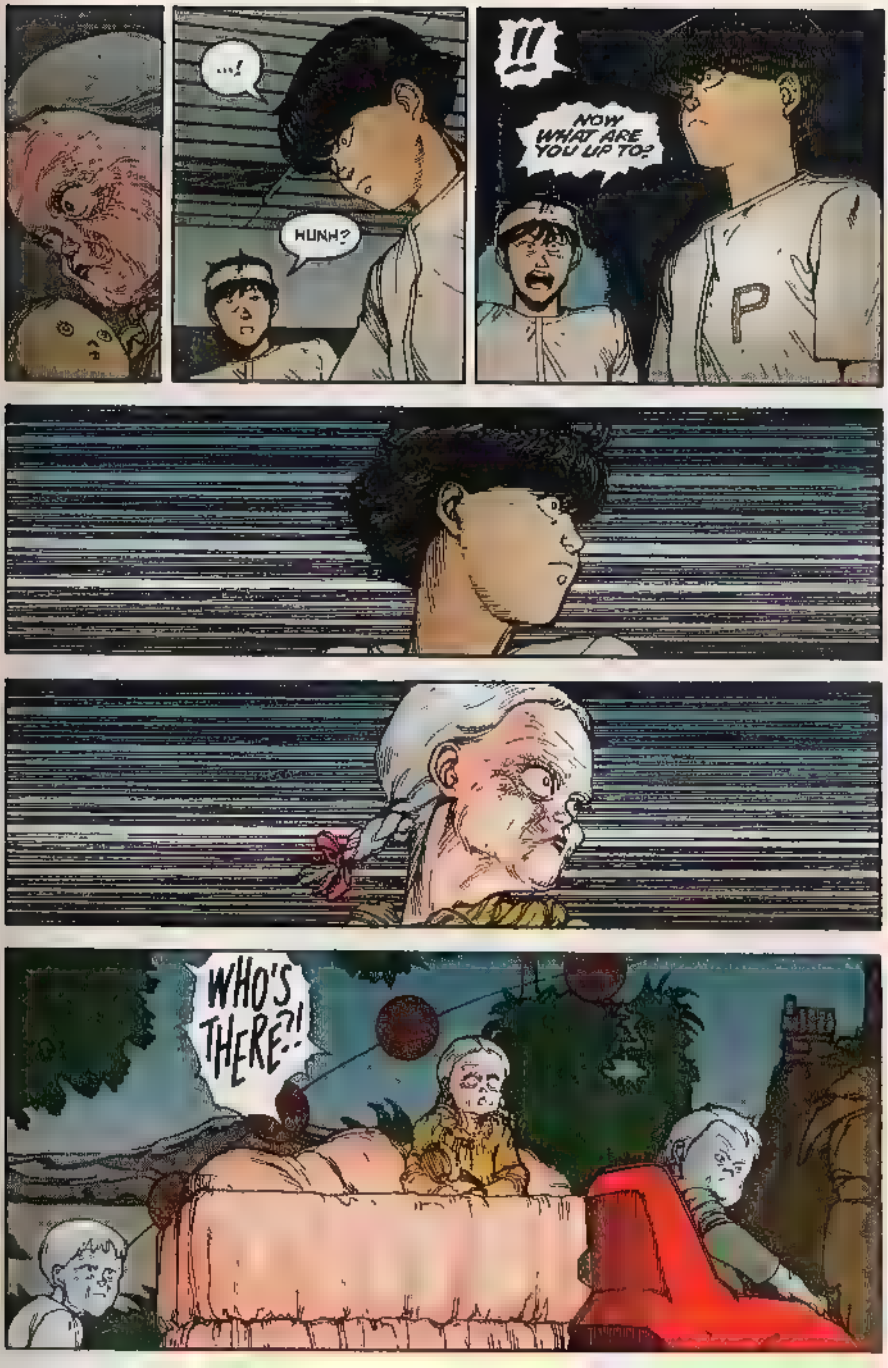

SNAP
SHOOM
!
HEY, WHAT'RE YOU DOING IN THERE?


OH!
COLONEL
WHAT'S THE R STATUS?
ALREADY ASLEEP S.R.
DON'T LET ANYONE IN UNTIL I GET BACK
YESSIR!

EH?

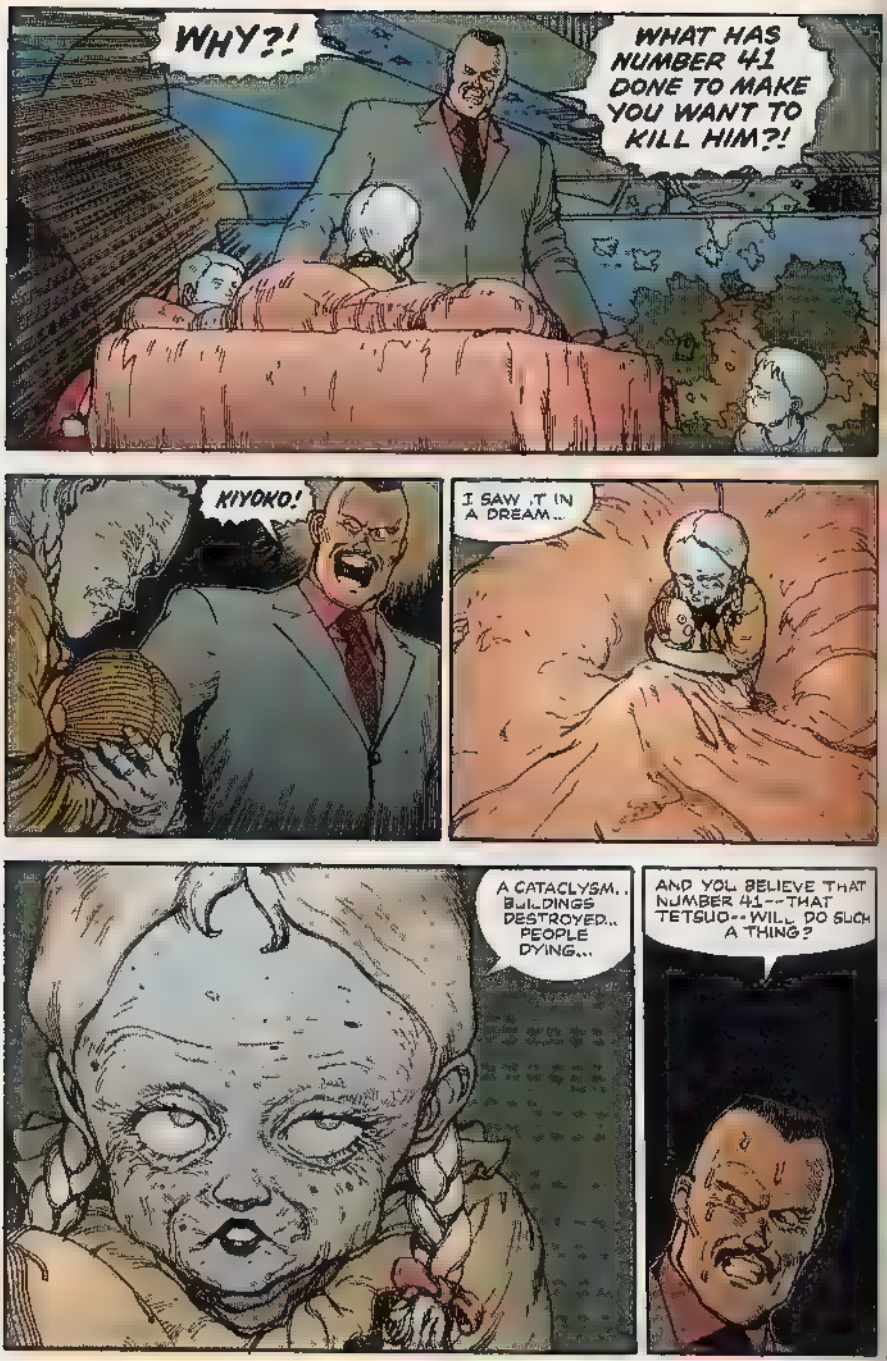


YOU BETTER GO EASY, KAY. WE'RE IN BIG TROUBLE AS IT IS.
HURRY UP AND--!
ZAP
YIPE!
WHA. . .
WHAT IS THAT THING?!


...!
HUNH?
!!
NOW WHAT ARE YOU UP TO?
WHO'S THERE?!

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS?!
I SHOULD HAVE REALIZED THE MOMENT I SAW THE TAPES..
THAT GIRL USED TELEPORTATION...
AN EXCEEDINGLY RARE TALENT ...WHICH YOU POSSESS
WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH USING HER?!

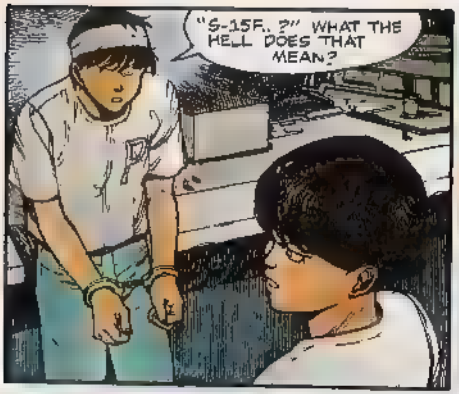
KILL
"KILL"...?!
YESS...
KILL, TETSUO.
TE-TETSUO?!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, KILL HIM?
HUNH?!
IS THAT WHAT THE GUN'S FOR?
WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT, ANYWAY?!
IS HE HERE?
IS TETSUO IN THIS BUILDING?!


WHY?!
WHAT HAS NUMBER 41 DONE TO MAKE YOU WANT TO KILL HIM?!
KIYOKO!
I SAW IT IN A DREAM...
A CATACLYSM.. BUILDINGS DESTROYED... PEOPLE DYING...
AND YOU BELIEVE THAT NUMBER 41--THAT TETSUO--WILL DO SUCH A THING?

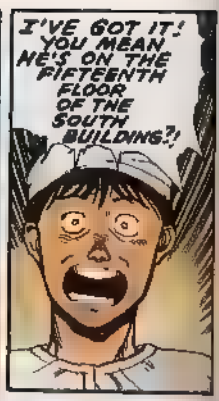
NO...BUT AKIRA WILL.
AKIRA!
WHY WOULD AKIRA DESTROY ANYTHING? AND WHAT HAS NUMBER 41 TO DO WITH IT?
THAT'S WHY WE HAVE TO KILL TETSUO.
I'M ALL IN FAVOR OF IT! WHERE IS HE?!
THAT'S WHY WE HAVE TO KILL TETSUO.
HOWEVER..
.. IT'S MORE THAN WE CAN ACCOMPLISH ALONE, THAT'S WHY..
YOU USED THAT GIRL!! WHERE IS SHE NOW?!

GUNS AREN'T ENOUGH
SOMETHING ELSE... MORE.
SOMETHING MORE...?
A BEAM OF LIGHT... A LASER.
A LASER!!
SO THAT'S WHERE SHE IS!
I ASKED YOU WHERE TETSUO IS!
COME ON, KAY!

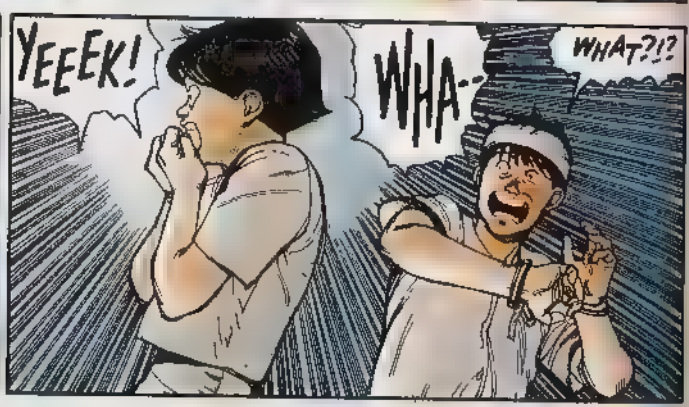
NOW TETSUO S..
NOW TETSUO IS...
WHERE? WHERE IS HE?! IF YOU KNOW, SPIT IT OUT!
SURELY THIS CAN WAIT UNTIL TOMORROW
IT'S WAY PAST THEIR BEDTIME

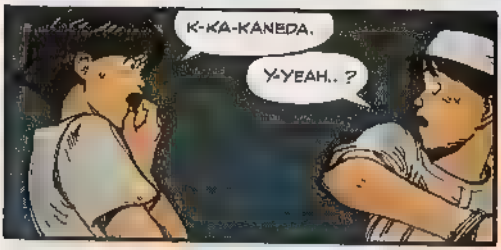

"S-15F..?" WHAT THE HELL DOES THAT MEAN?

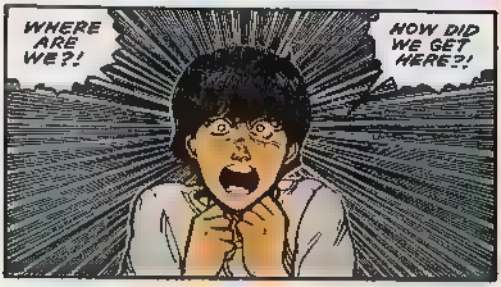
"S"
"S"
!

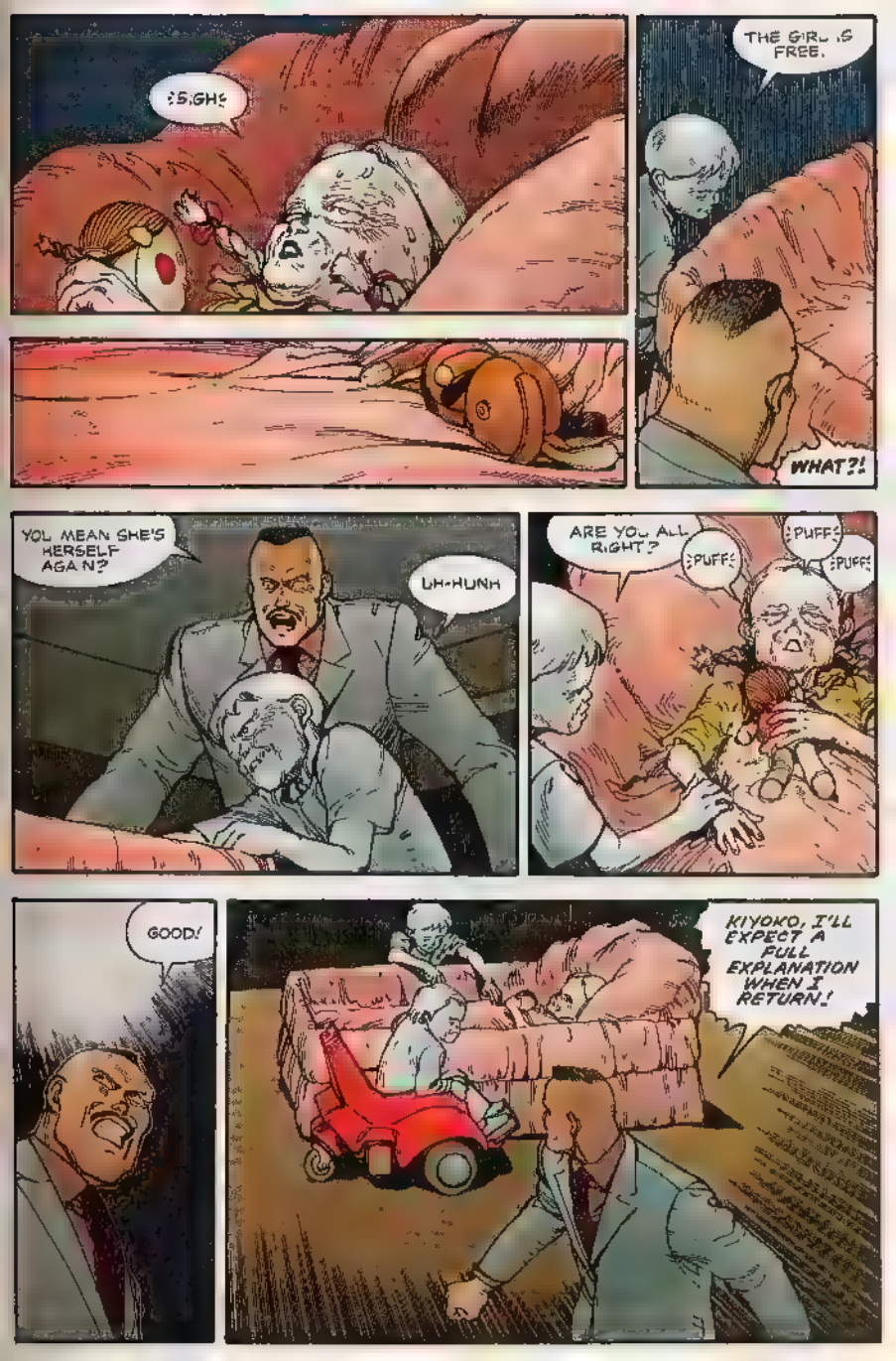

I'VE GOT IT! YOU MEAN HE'S ON THE FIFTEENTH FLOOR OF THE SOUTH BUILDING?!

THUD


YEEEK!
WHA--
WHAT?!?

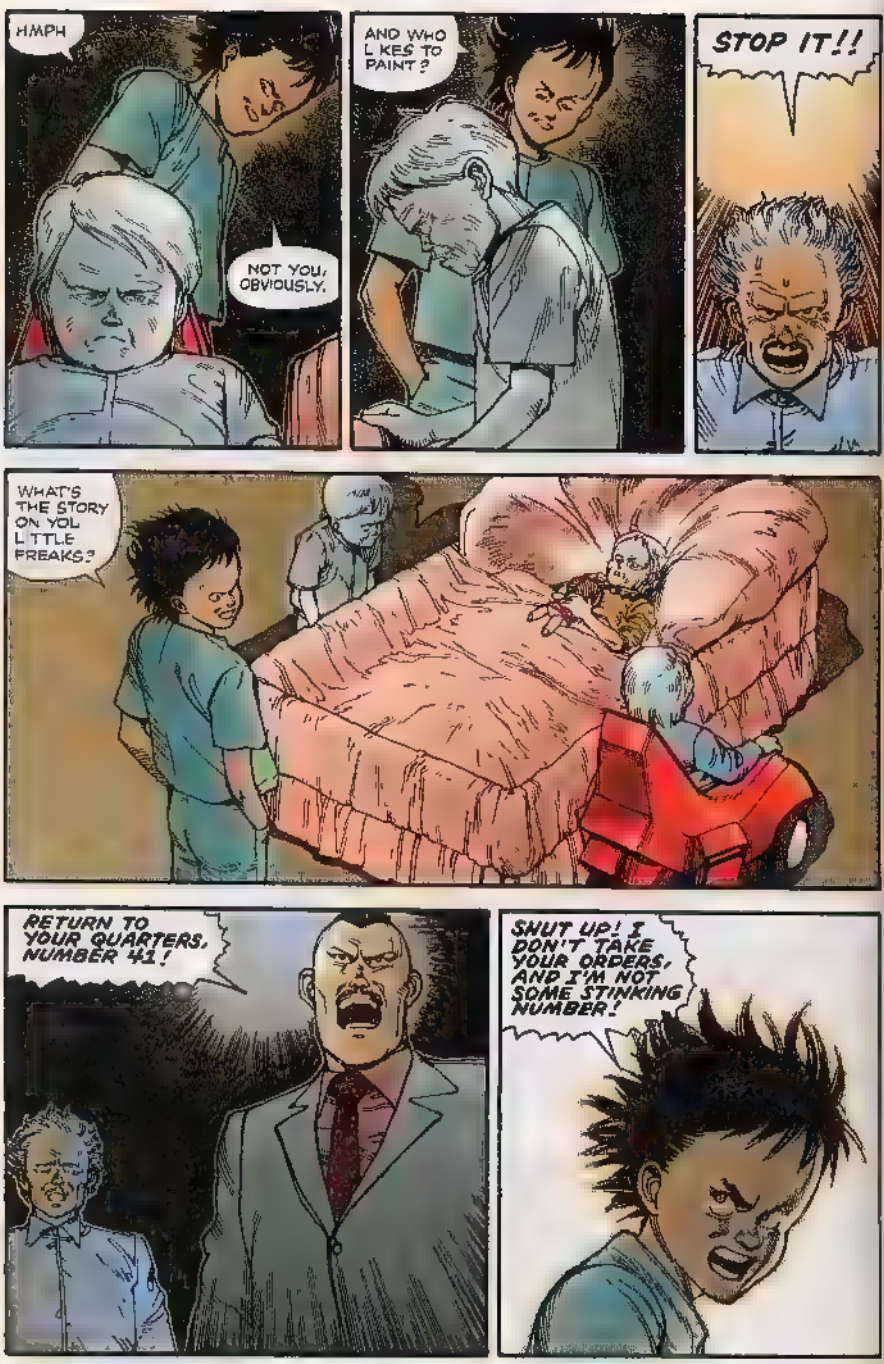

K-KA-KANEDA.
Y-YEAH..?

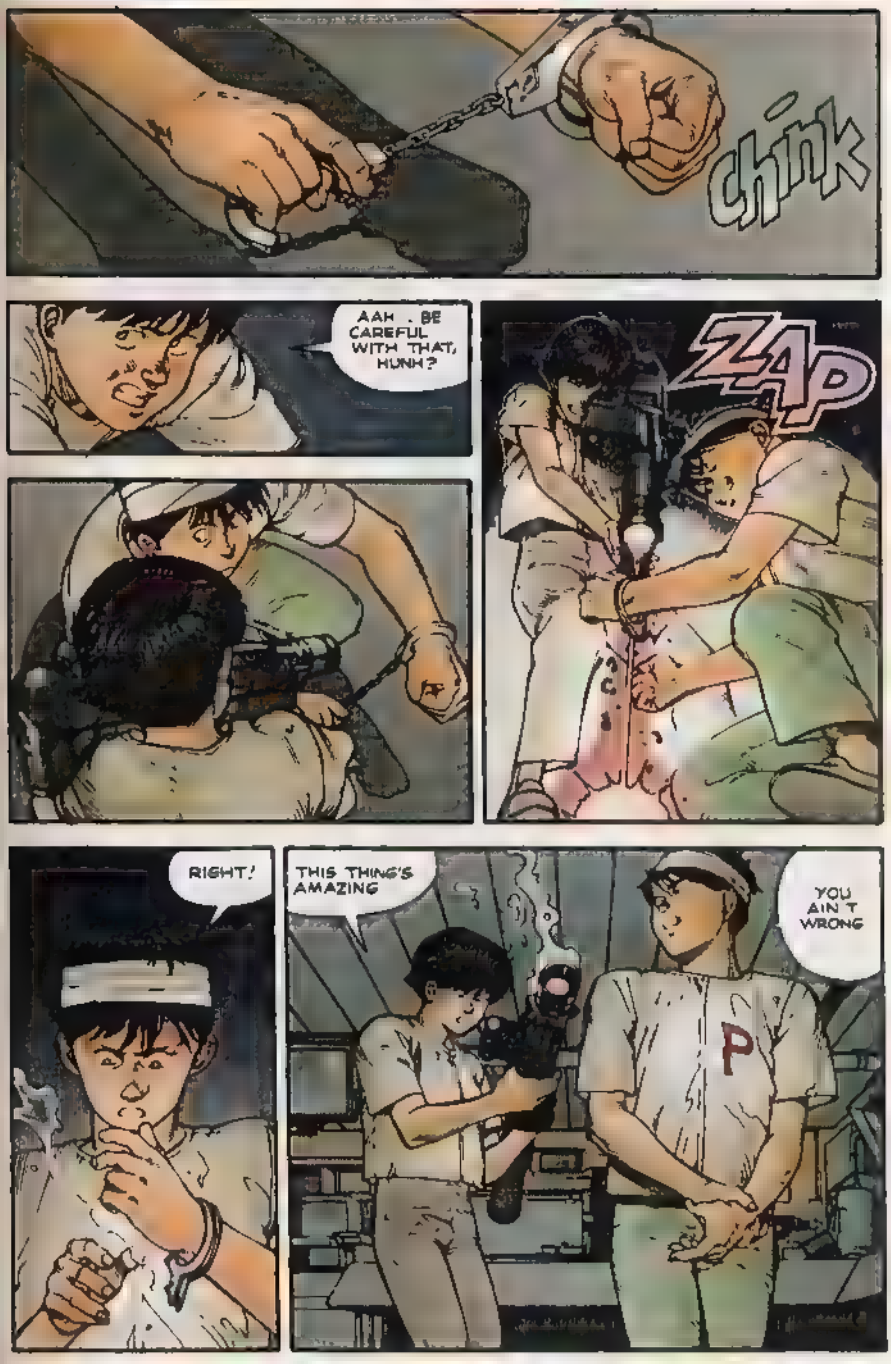

WHERE ARE WE?!
HOW DID WE GET HERE?!

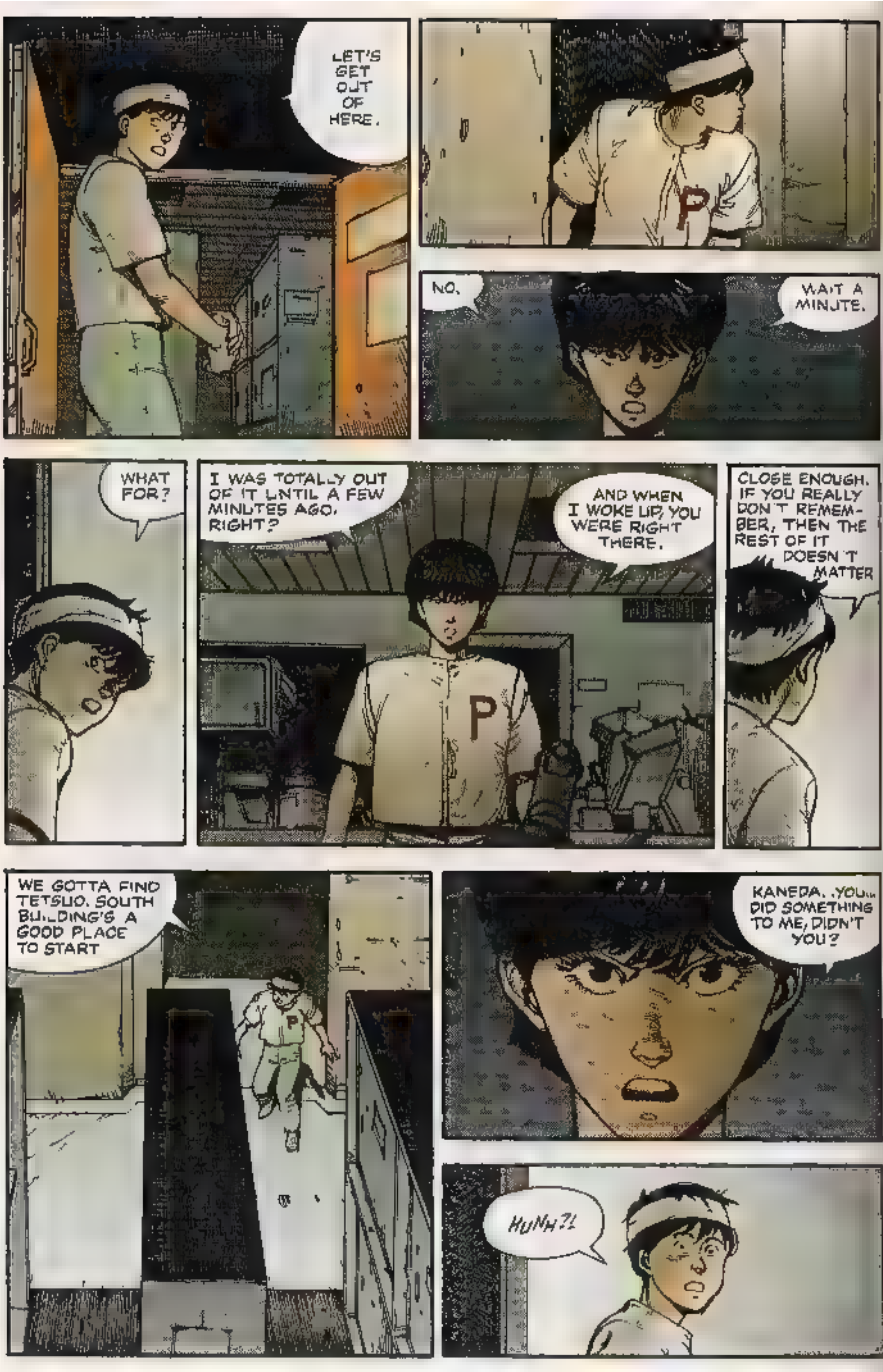

SIGH
THE GIRL IS FREE.
WHAT?!
YOU MEAN SHE'S HERSELF AGAIN?
UH-HUNH
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
PUFF
PUFF
PUFF
GOOD!
KIYOKO, I'LL EXPECT A FULL EXPLANATION WHEN I RETURN!

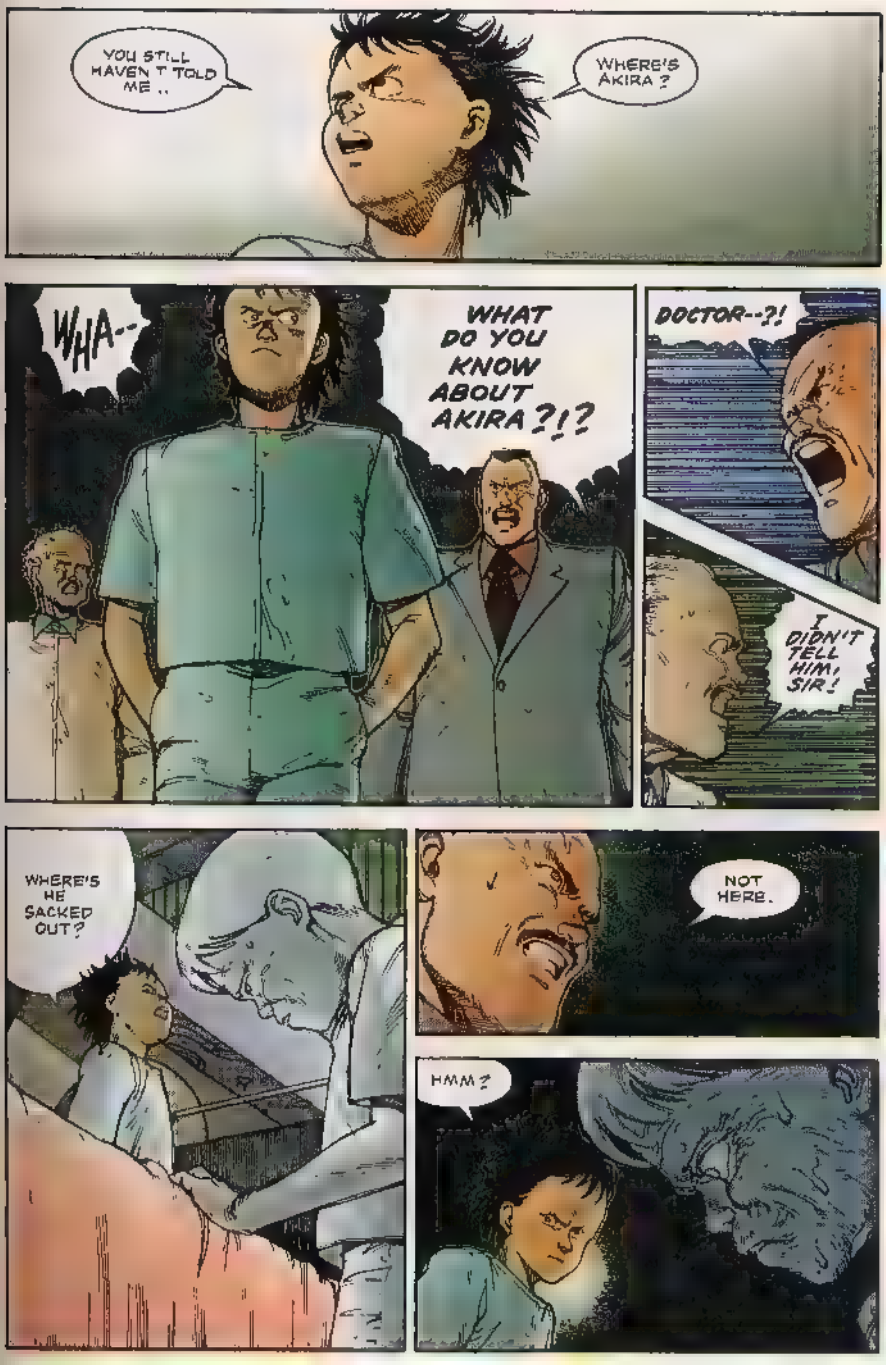
YOU!!
TETSUO!!!
AND YOU, DOCTOR?!
HE... HE... INSISTED ON COMING, SIR. HE WOULDN'T WAIT.
SO, HOW ABOUT INTRODUCING US?

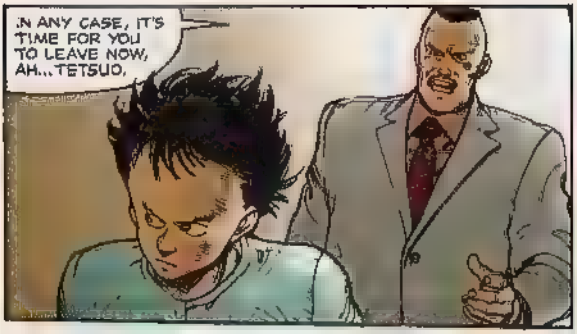
TE...
TETSU ..O..
YOU...
.....
SO.. WHICH ONE OF YOU'S GOOD AT RUNNING?


HMPH
NOT YOU, OBVIOUSLY.
AND WHO LIKES TO PAINT?
STOP IT!!
WHAT'S THE STORY ON YOU LITTLE FREAKS?
RETURN TO YOUR QUARTERS, NUMBER 41!
SHUT UP! I DON'T TAKE YOUR ORDERS, AND I'M NOT SOME STINKING NUMBER!

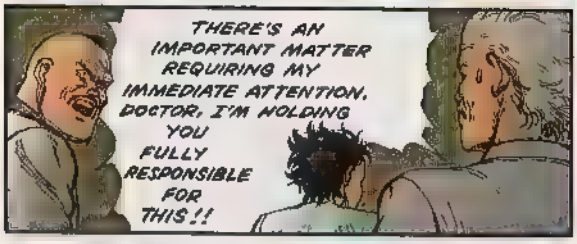

chink
AAH . BE CAREFUL WITH THAT, HUNH?
ZAP
RIGHT!
THIS THING'S AMAZING
YOU AIN'T WRONG

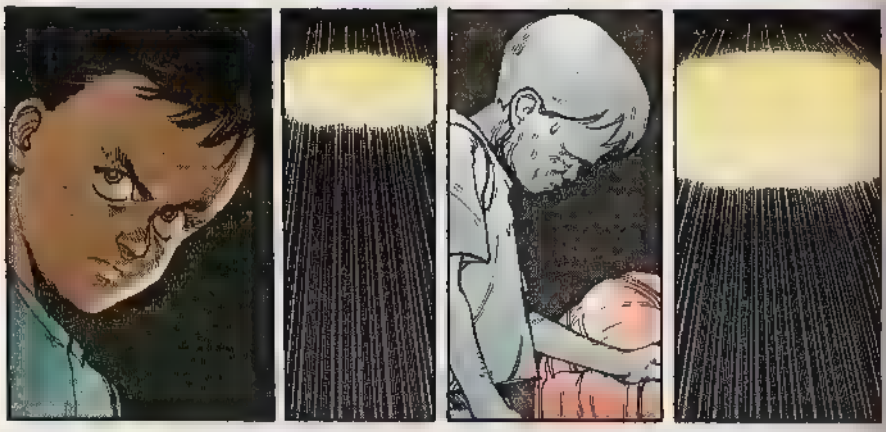

LET'S GET OUT OF HERE.
NO.
WAIT A MINUTE.
WHAT FOR?
I WAS TOTALLY OUT OF IT UNTIL A FEW MINUTES AGO, RIGHT?
AND WHEN I WOKE UP, YOU WERE RIGHT THERE.
CLOSE ENOUGH. IF YOU REALLY DON'T REMEMBER, THEN THE REST OF IT DOESN'T MATTER
WE GOTTA FIND TETSUO. SOUTH BUILDING'S A GOOD PLACE TO START
KANEDA...YOU... DID SOMETHING TO ME, DIDN'T YOU?
HUNH?!


YOU STILL HAVEN'T TOLD ME..
WHERE'S AKIRA?
WHA--
WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT AKIRA?!?
DOCTOR--?!
I DIDN'T TELL HIM, SIR!
WHERE'S HE SACKED OUT?
NOT HERE.
HMM?


IN ANY CASE, IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO LEAVE NOW, AH...TETSUO.

VERY GOOD, SIR!

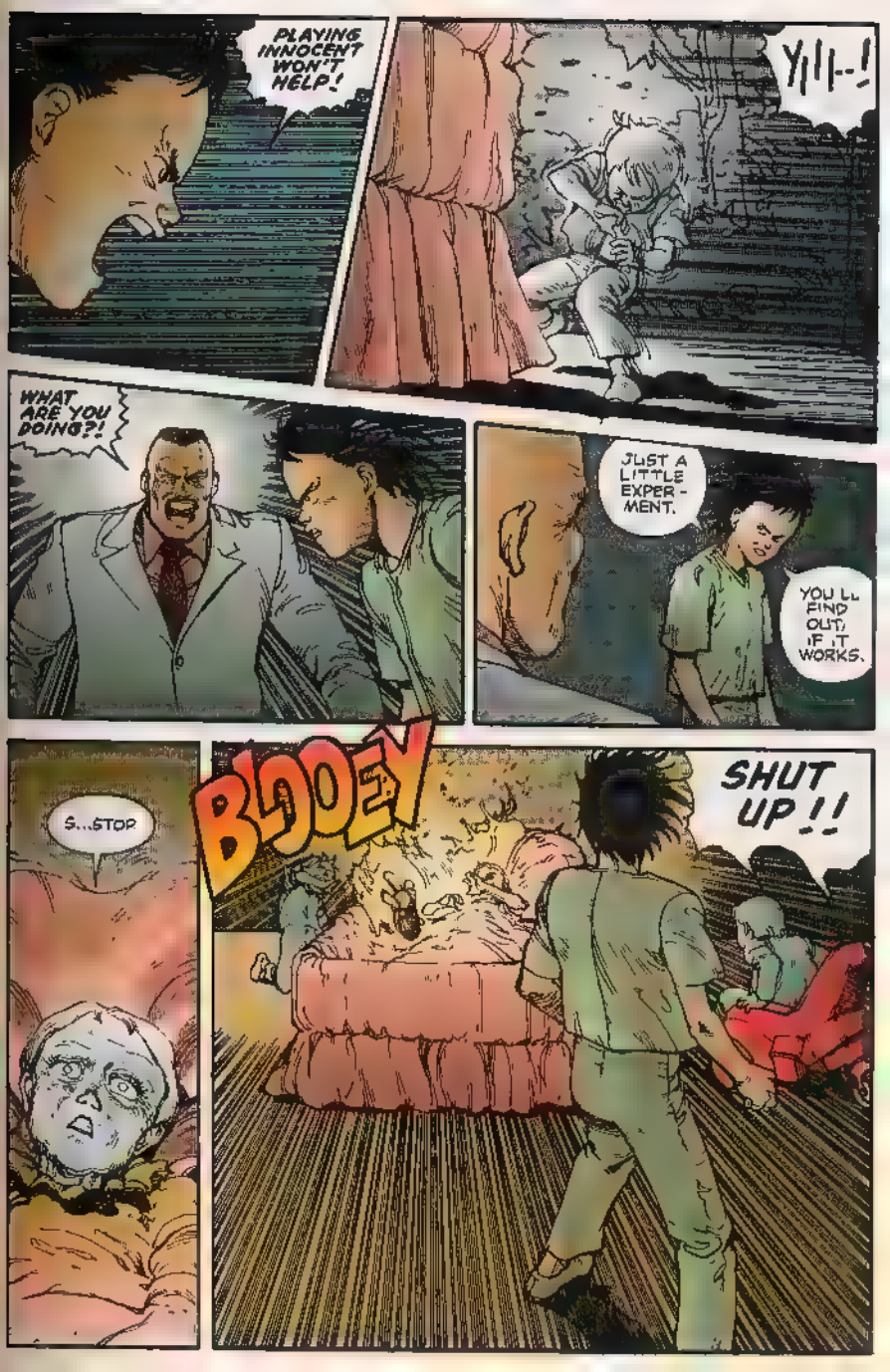

THERE'S AN IMPORTANT MATTER REQUIRING MY IMMEDIATE ATTENTION, DOCTOR. I'M HOLDING YOU FULLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS!!

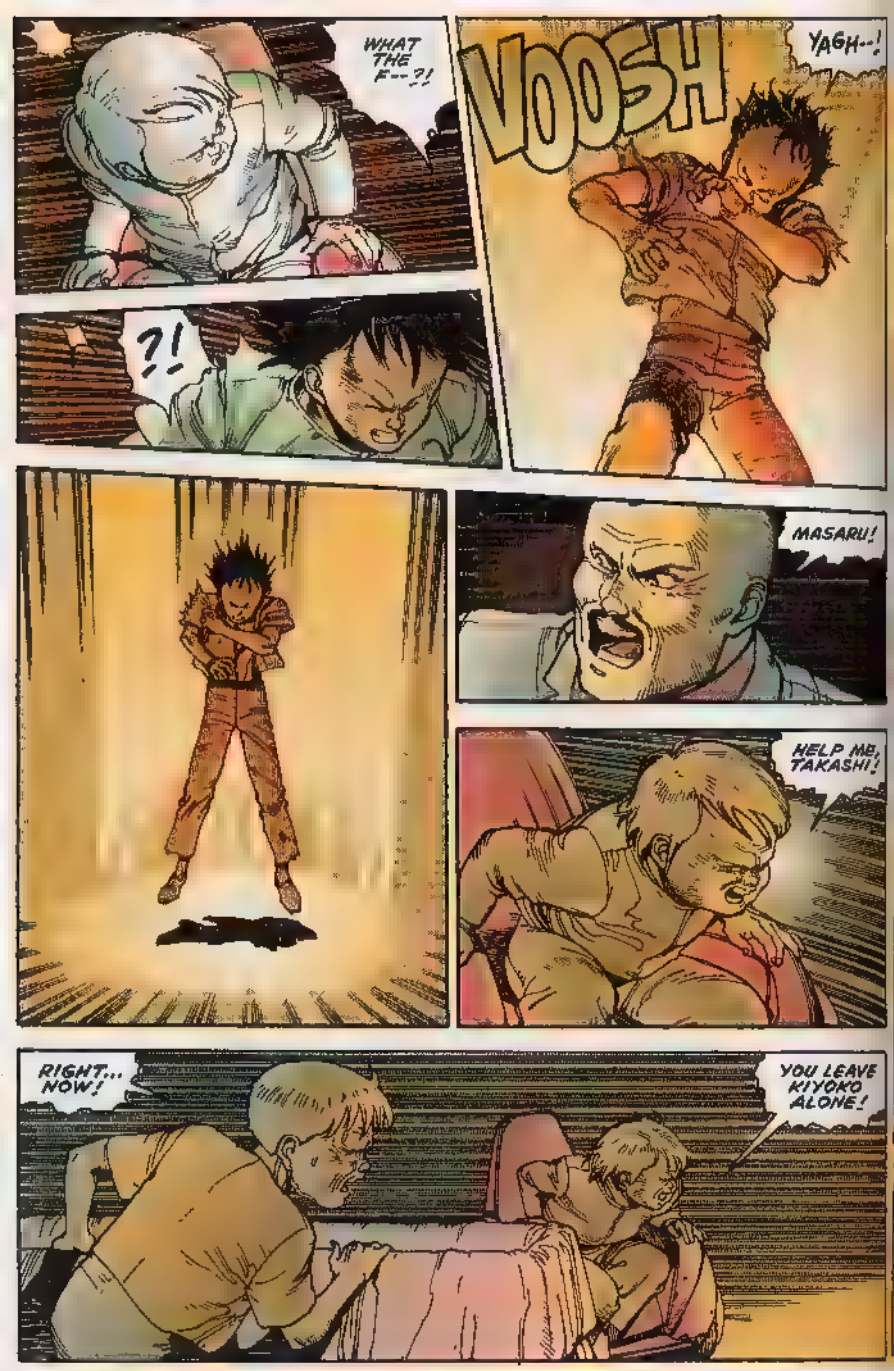


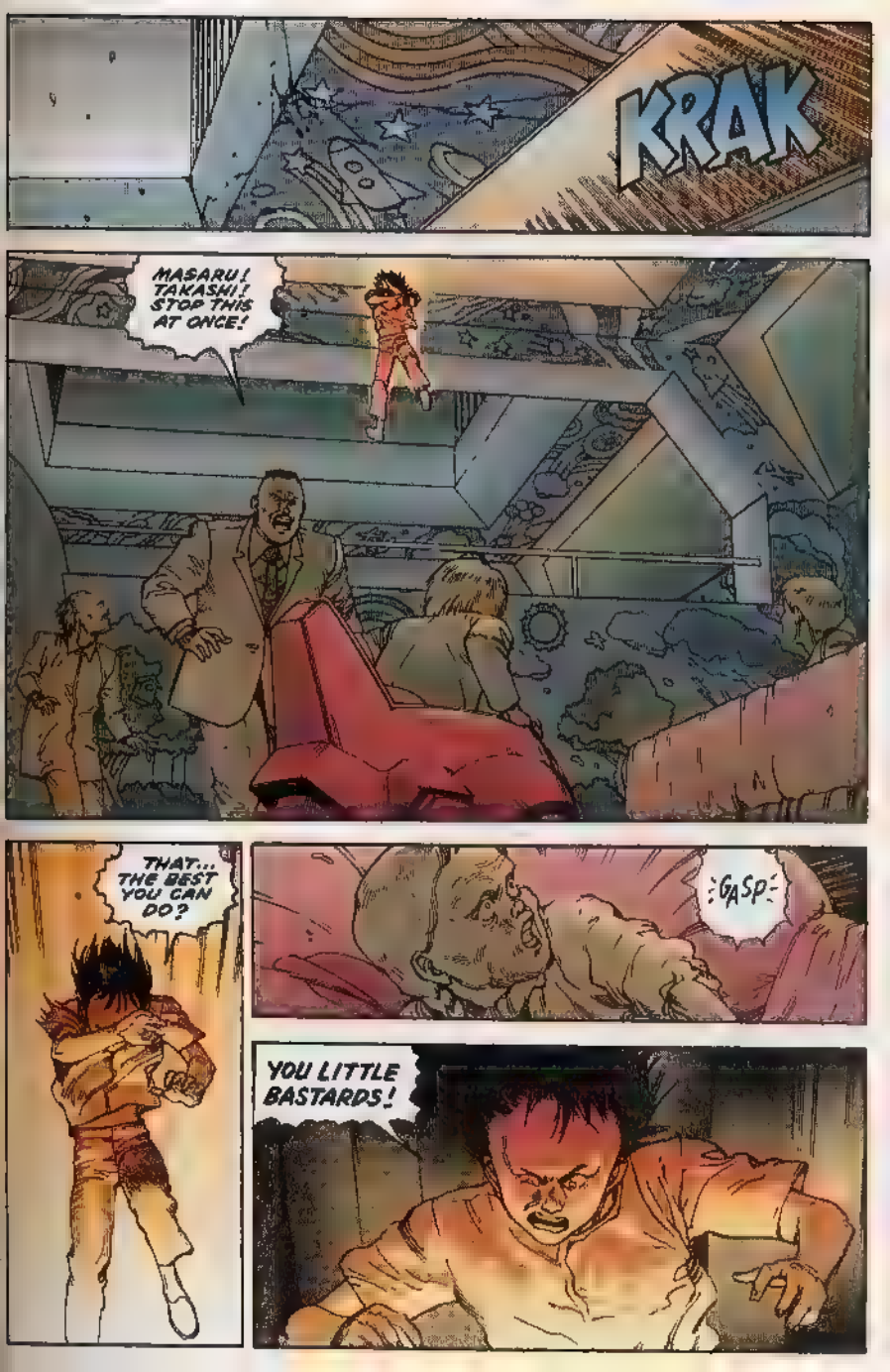
VRRRRRN

I'VE GOT IT!
!
26
I KNOW WHERE I'VE SEEN YOU BEFORE!
YOU'RE THE KID FROM THAT NIGHT OUT ON THE HIGHWAY!

YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING!
C8-M
.....
WHAT'S WRONG?
YOU FILTHY PIG!
JUST WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?!
I DON'T TALK TO PERVERTS!


PLAYING INNOCENT WON'T HELP!
YIII--!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
JUST A LITTLE EXPER-MENT.
YOU'LL FIND OUT, IF IT WORKS.
S...STOP
BLOOEY
SHUT UP!!

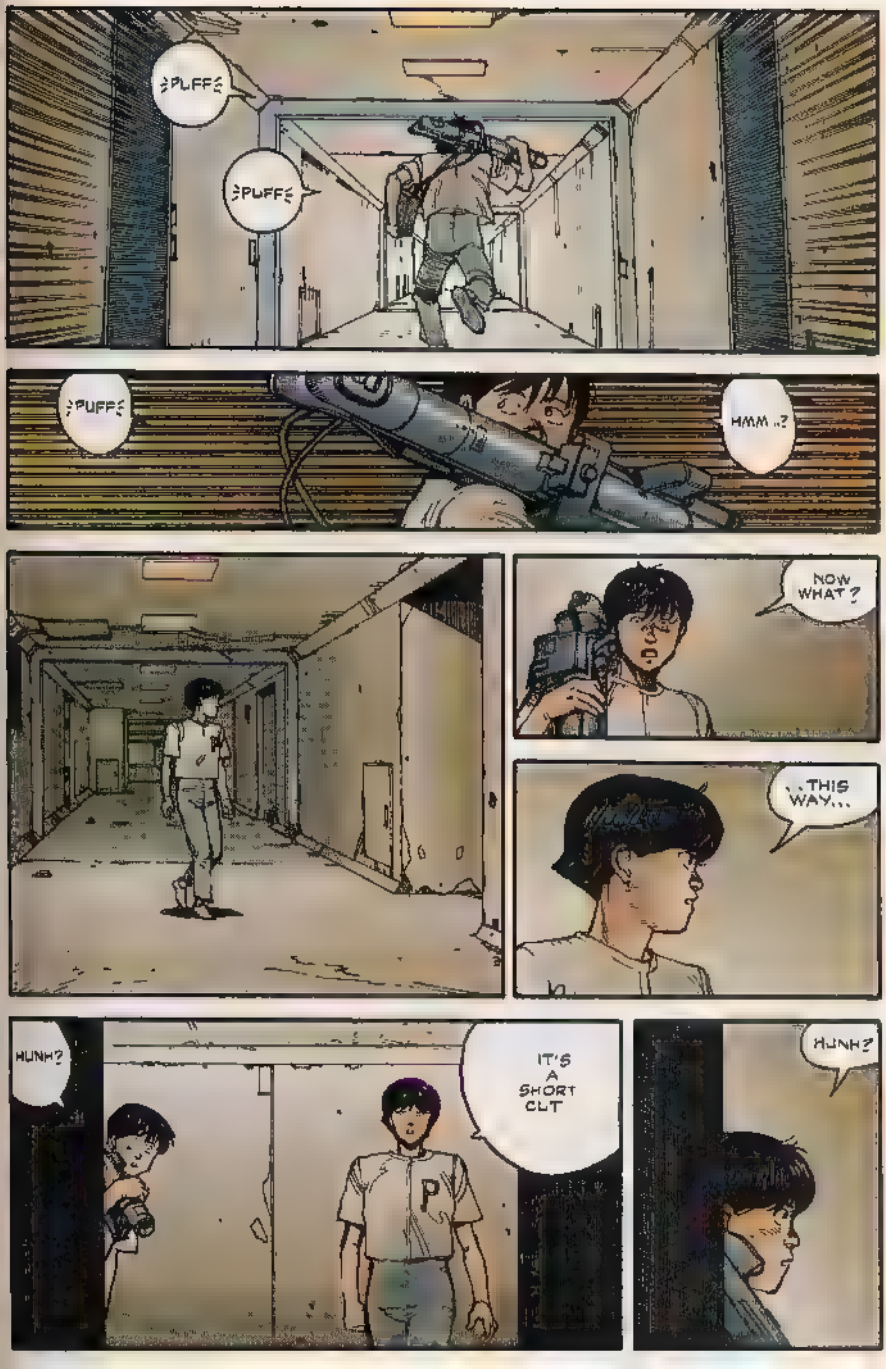

WHAT THE F--?!
?!
VOOSH
YAGH--!
MASARU!
HELP ME, TAKASHI!
RIGHT... NOW!
YOU LEAVE KIYOKO ALONE!


KRAK
MASARU! TAKASHI! STOP THIS AT ONCE!
THAT... THE BEST YOU CAN DO?
:GASP:
YOU LITTLE BASTARDS!

?!
WHOOM
YAAH!
tap
MASARU!
THAT'S ENOUGH!
tap

!
Krrr
CHILL OUT... POP.
...Y...Y... YOU...
BIG GUY LIKE YOU...
THINK YOU'RE SO TOUGH..

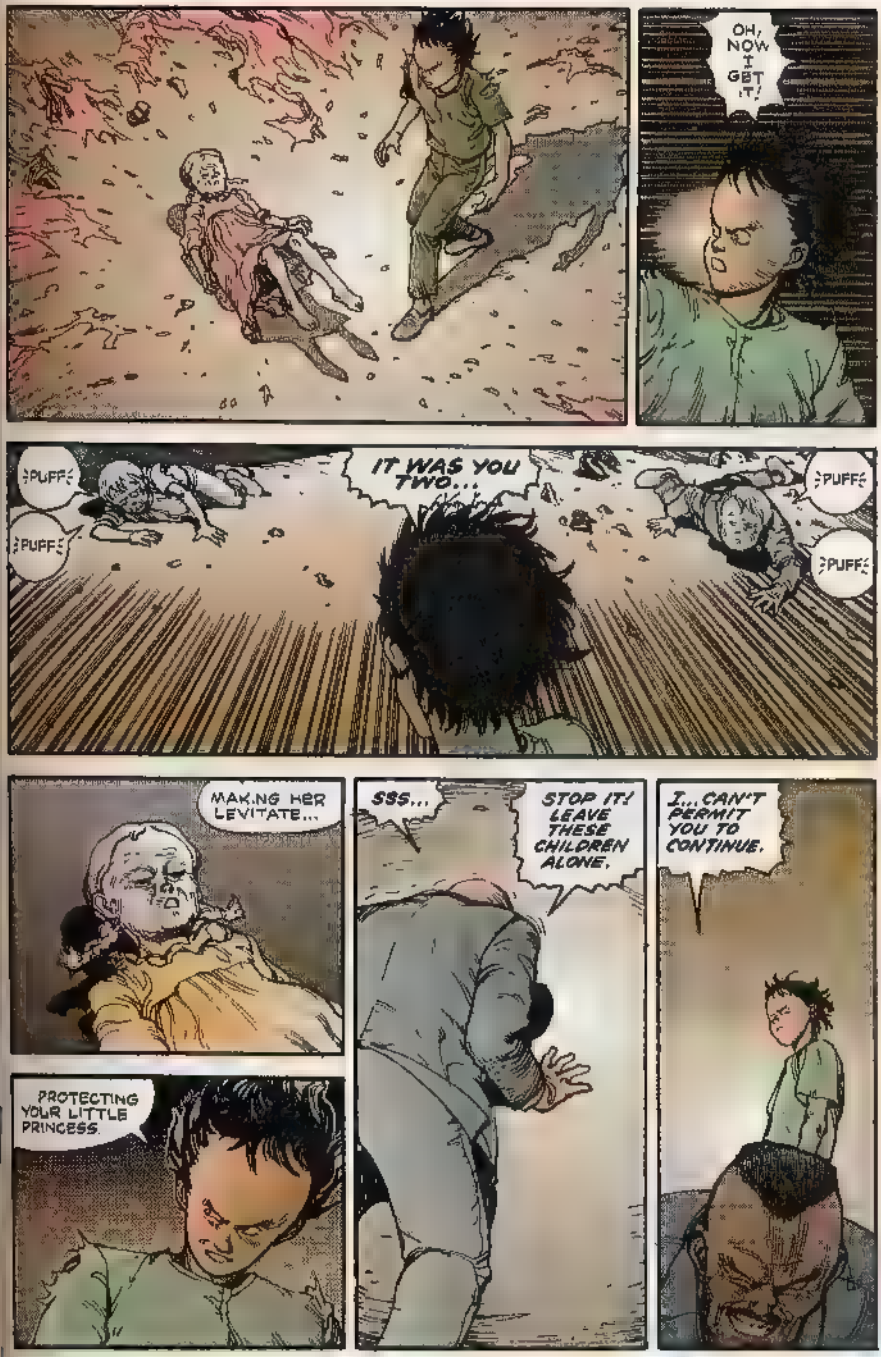
WHAM
GAH...
THE GIRL...
SUMMON THE GIRL!


PUFF
PUFF
PUFF
HMM..?
NOW WHAT?
..THIS WAY...
HUNH?
IT'S A SHORT CUT
HUNH?

HURRY!
H-HEY!
HERE WE GO AGAIN!
ARENT THESE THE GENERA-TORS?
WHAT ARE WE DOING HERE?
LOOK! AN ELEVATOR!
B3
OH!

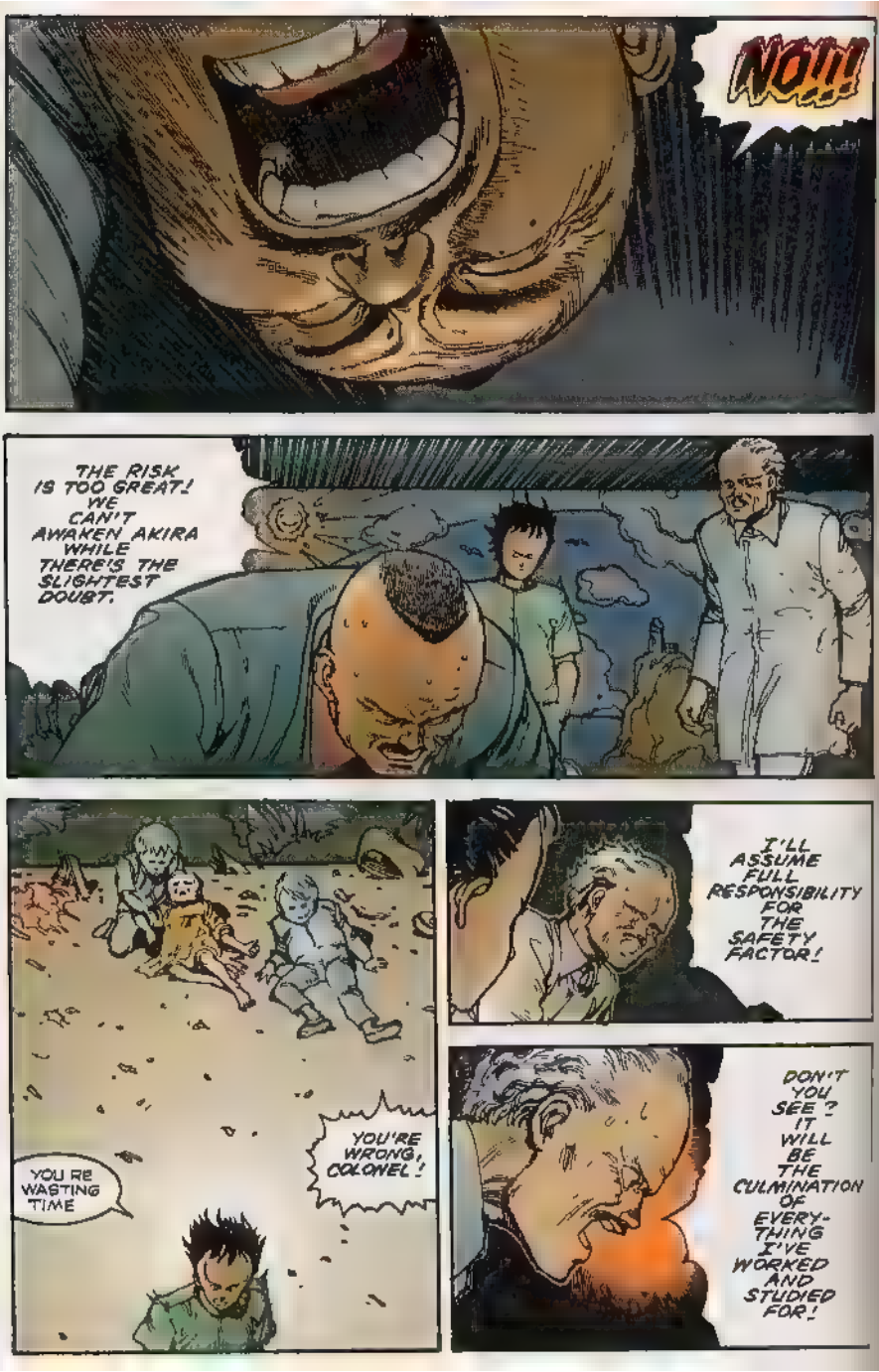
SLAM
AH... AH...
DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE TIRED OF PLAYING ALREADY!
AW ISN'T SHE CUTE? THE LITTLE SLEEPING BEAUTY...

BLAAAT
YOU'RE HISTORY!
HUNH?
WH WHAT IS THIS?!


OH, NOW I GET IT!
PUFF
PUFF
IT WAS YOU TWO...
PUFF
PUFF
MAKING HER LEVITATE...
SSS...
STOP IT! LEAVE THESE CHILDREN ALONE.
I...CAN'T PERMIT YOU TO CONTINUE.
PROTECTING YOUR LITTLE PRINCESS.

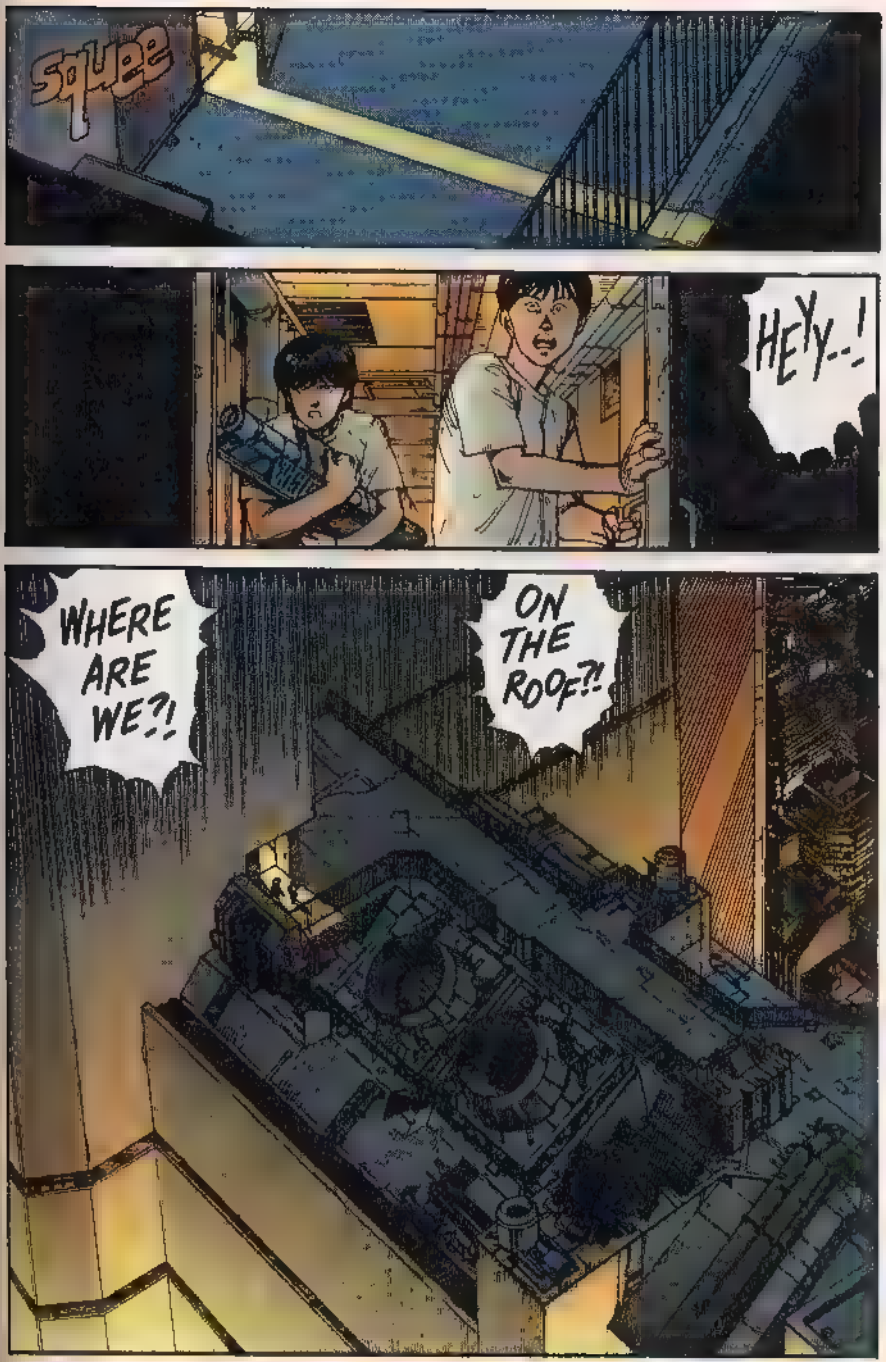
I'LL STOP... WHEN YOU TELL ME WHERE TO FIND AKIRA.
I SEE! VERY WELL...
NO!
IT'S WORTH A TRY, COLONEL!
DO YOU REALIZE WHAT YOU'RE SAYING?
YES!
HAVEN'T WE BEEN SEEKING SOMEONE WHO CAN CONTROL AKIRA? LET NUMBER 41 TRY!

AKIRA HAS HELD UP THIS PROJECT FOR THIRTY YEARS!
OF COURSE, WE'D HAVE TO RUN TESTS FIRST.. ESTABLISH CONTROLS..
WE CAN'T THROW AWAY THIS CHANCE TO MASTER AKIRA!
PUFF:
GASP:
GASP.
THIS WAY! QUICKLY!
HOW DO YOU KNOW?
I DON'T KNOW HOW I KNOW. I JUST KNOW.


NO!!!
THE RISK IS TOO GREAT! WE CAN'T AWAKEN AKIRA WHILE THERE'S THE SLIGHTEST DOUBT.
I'LL ASSUME FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SAFETY FACTOR!
YOU'RE WRONG, COLONEL!
YOU'RE WASTING TIME
DON'T YOU SEE? IT WILL BE THE CULMINATION OF EVERY-THING I'VE WORKED AND STUDIED FOR!

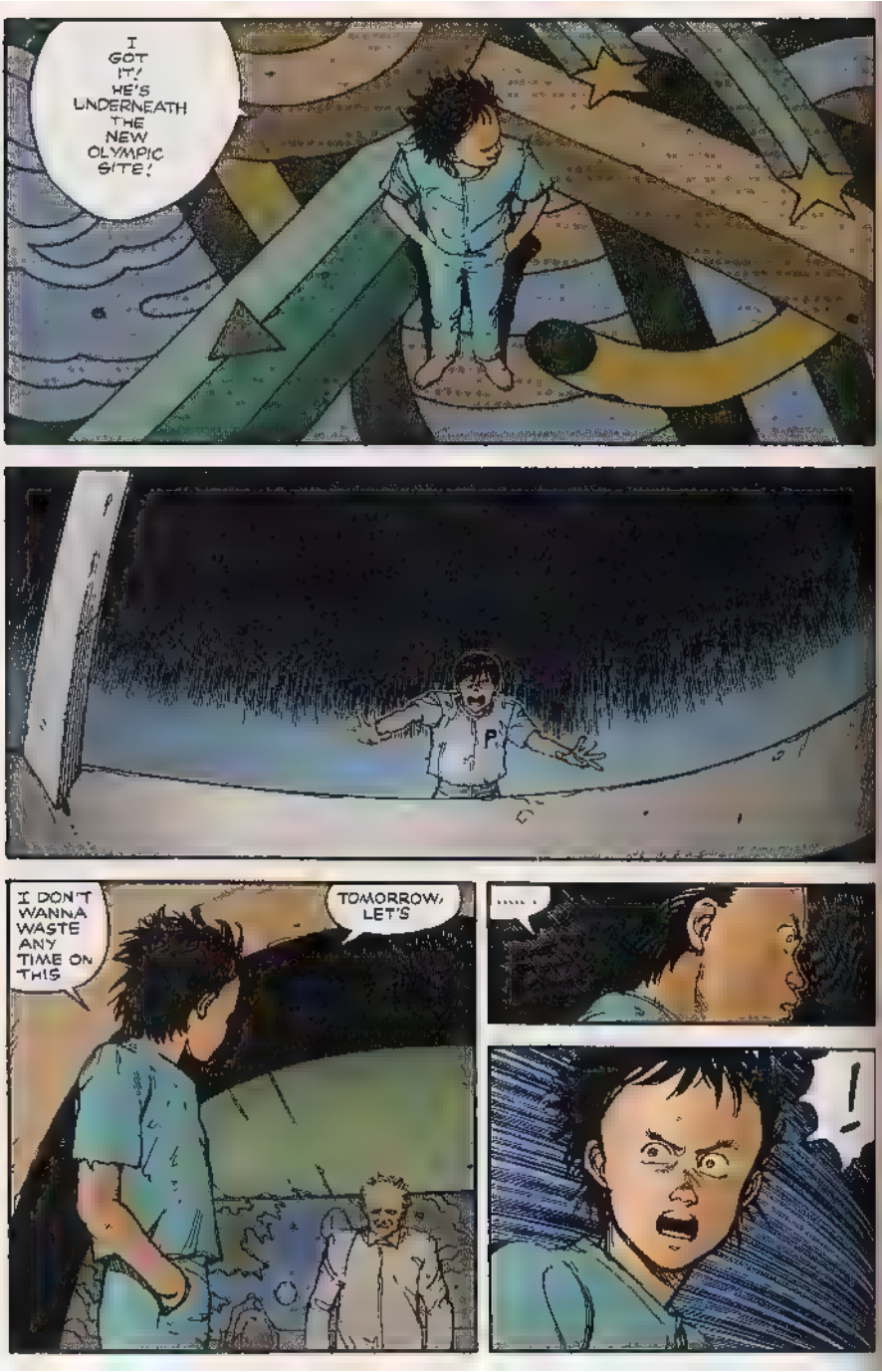
SEE? THE OLD COOT'S WILLING TO TAKE THE BLAME IF ANYTHING HAPPENS, SO WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM?
ANSWER ME!
YOU CAN'T POSTPONE THIS THING FOREVER, COLONEL!
IT HAS TO HAPPEN SOMETIME!
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT AKIRA'S LIKE!
BUT NOT YET! I CAN'T RISK MILLIONS OF LIVES--
--JUST TO SATISFY YOUR "SCIENTIFIC CURIOSITY" ...AND YOUR EGO!
SO HE DOESN'T WANNA PLAY, WELL GO WITHOUT HIM
NOW. .
OK
...JUST WHERE IS AKIRA?

COLONEL...?
...NO...
I SAID WE DON'T NEED YOU!
!
SLOK
GASP
UAAHN
I'M NOT STUPID, YOU KNOW. I DON'T PLAN TO TAKE ANY CHANCES WITH THIS AKIRA
C-COLONEL..
I'M JUST LIKE YOU INTERESTED IN EXPERIMENTS


SQUEE
HEY--!
WHERE ARE WE?!
ON THE ROOF?!

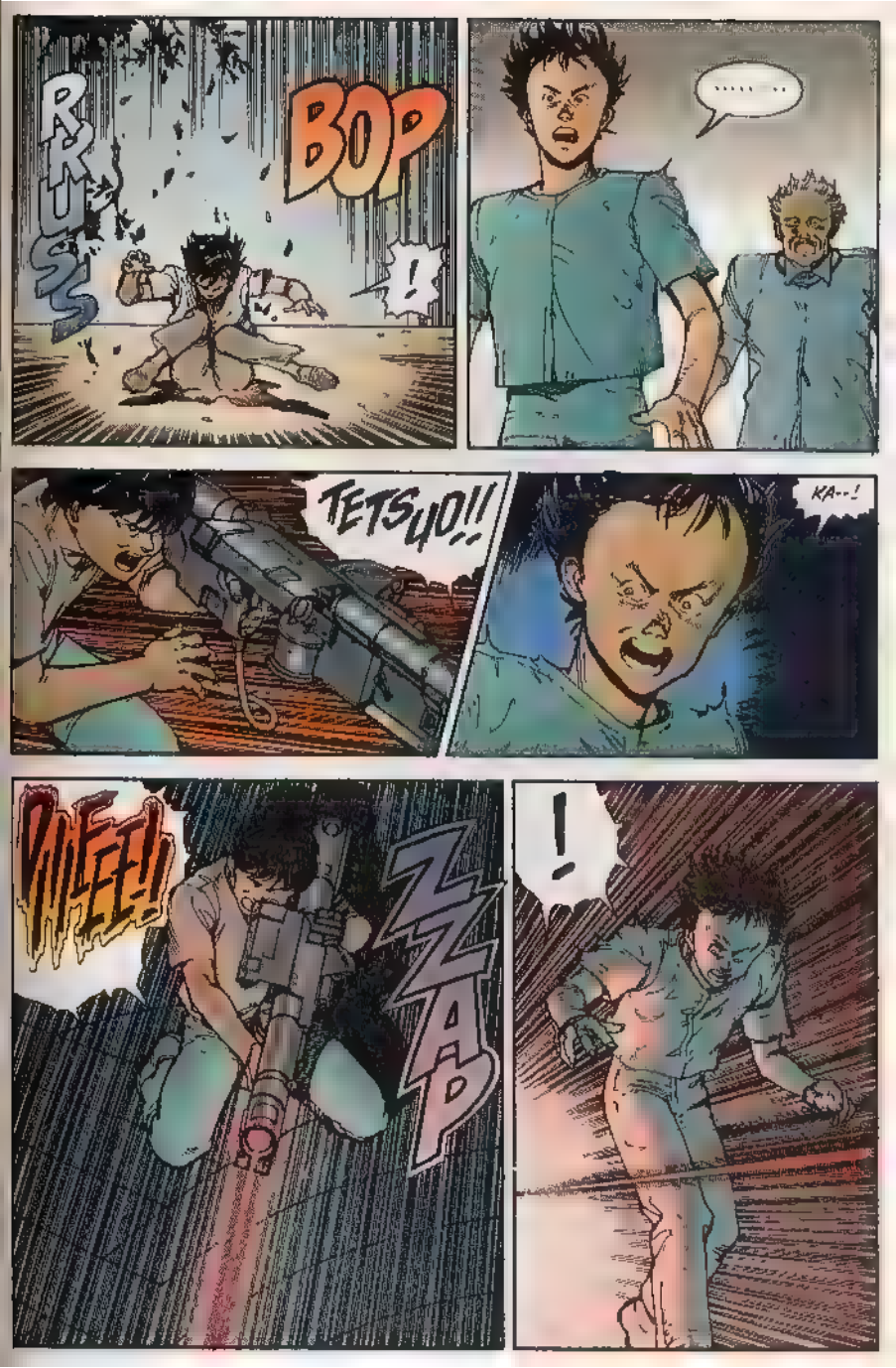
LOOKS LIKE IT.
"LOOKS LIKE IT! GREAT! WHAT ARE WE DOING HERE?
..HUMMM...
¿IS IT A SHORTCUT?
I GUESS..
WHOA! IT'S A LONG WAY DOWN FROM HERE!
LOOK AT THAT.

WHAT IS IT?
DO YOU THINK IT GOES ANYWHERE?
WELL..
LOOKS LIKE A BIG GREENHOUSE
!


I GOT IT! HE'S UNDERNEATH THE NEW OLYMPIC SITE!
I DON'T WANNA WASTE ANY TIME ON THIS
TOMORROW, LET'S
.....
!

KRASH
AAGH!!

YAAAH!
KANEDA!
KRESH
FLOTT
HMM...
Krakle
YEEEK!!!
FRUSH

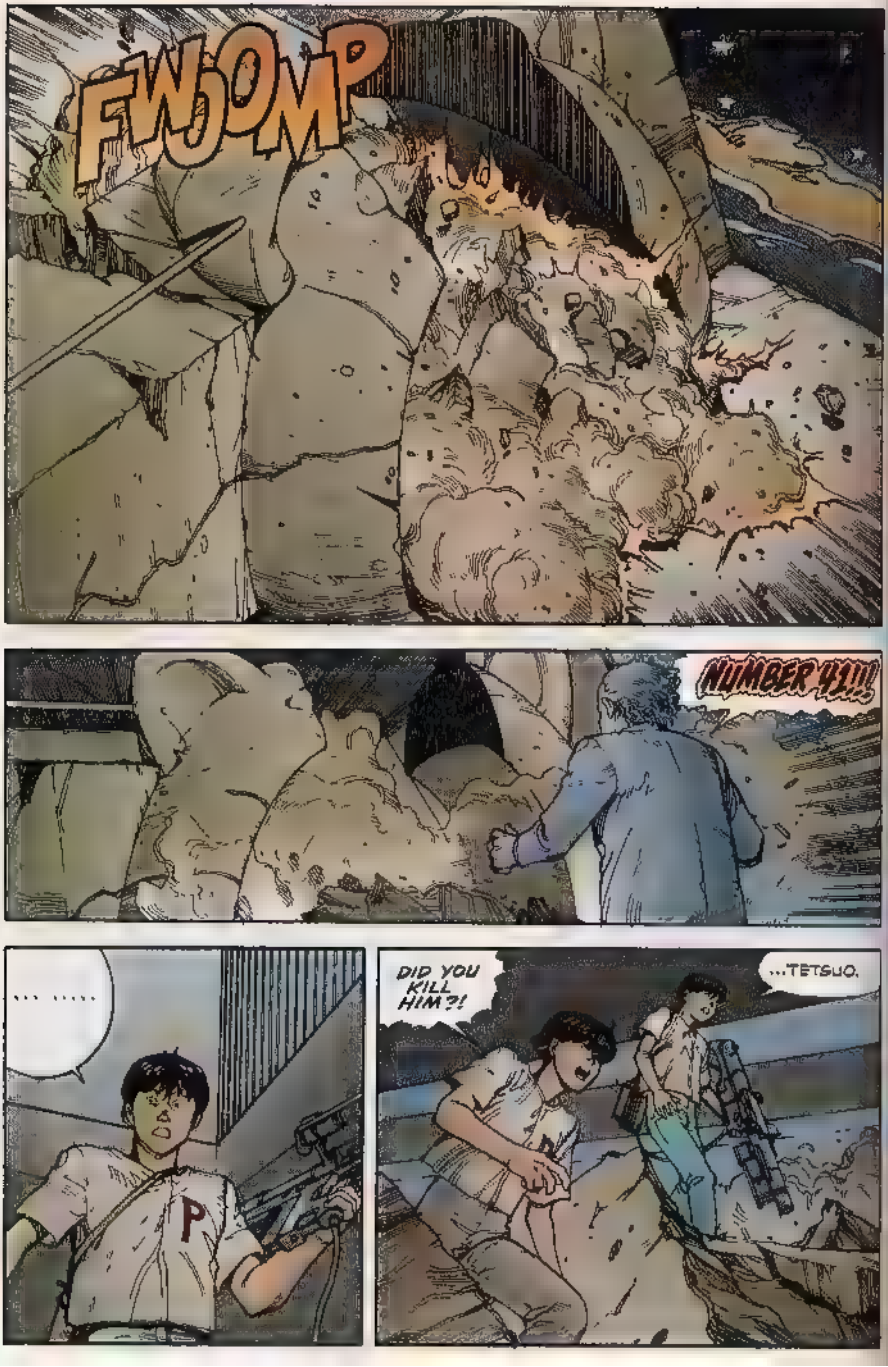

RUSS
BOP
!
.....
TETSUO!!
KA--!
PIFF!!
ZZAP
!

DAMN!
SSSSS
THE LASER...
GASP!
ZZSP
O-OW
TOK
TOK
TOK
ZAP
HOP
FWOOSH

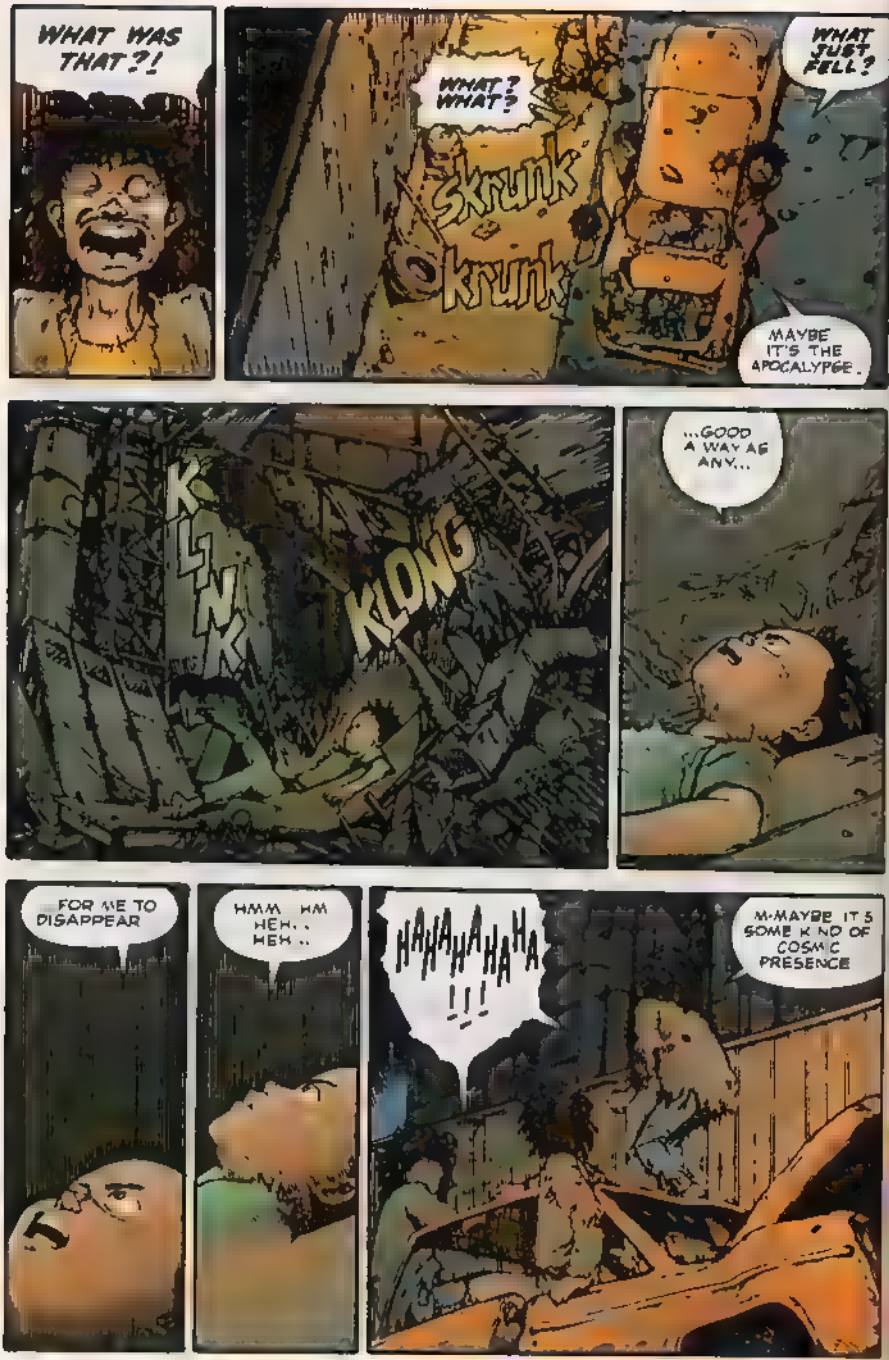
NOW...
KRUNK
SHIT!!!
ZASP
YIPE!!
DID I GET HIM ?!
WHAT IS THAT ?!

KANEDAAA!
ARE YOU OKAAAY ?!
ZUUM
YAAH!
ZAAAAP
HELP!
...AHN...
AAGH!
ZAP

ZZAAP
ZSSSD
HEY, TETSUO, HAVING FUN YET?!
SHUNK

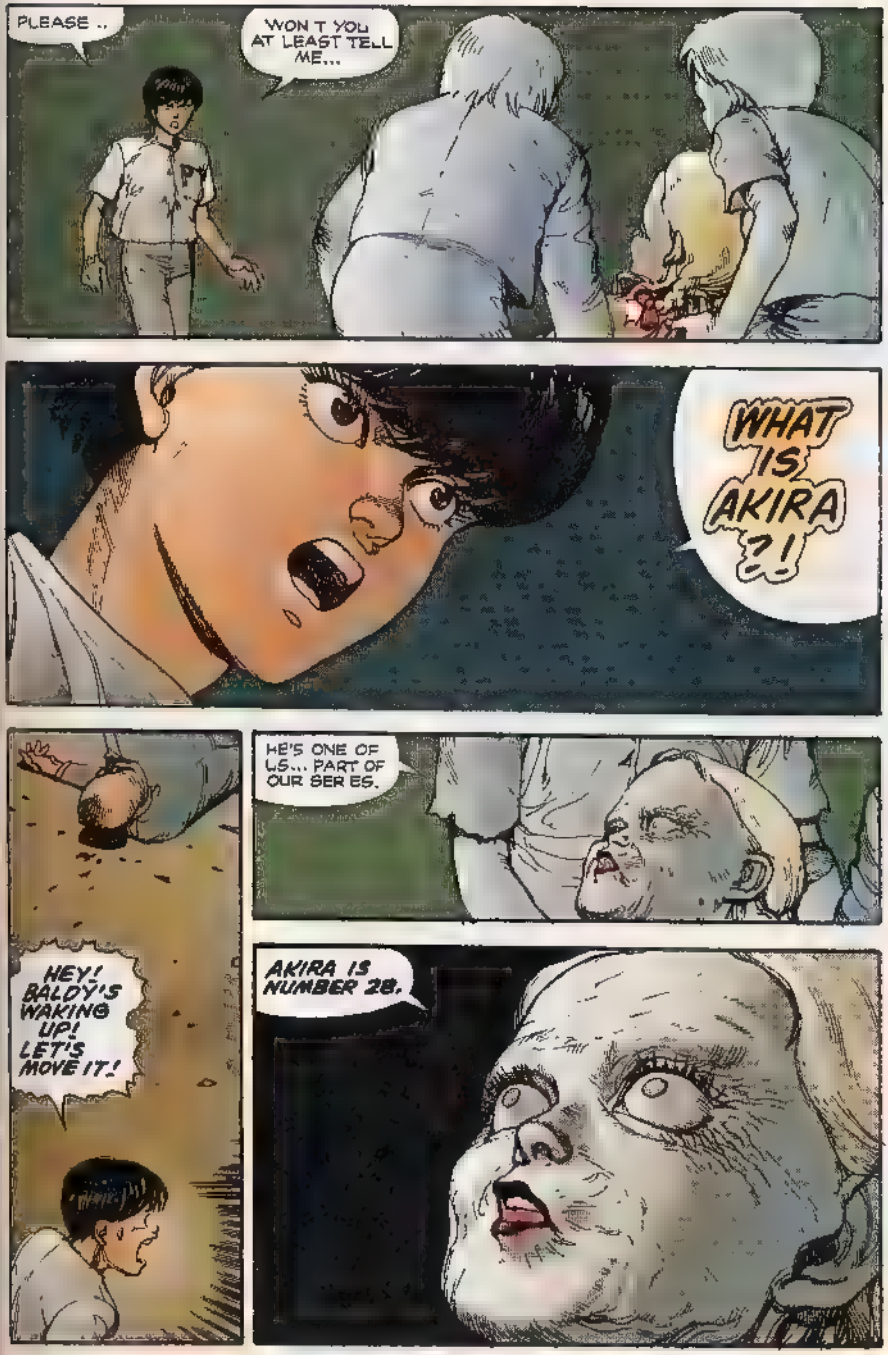

FWOOMP
NUMBER 43!!!
... .
DID YOU KILL HIM?!
...TETSUO.

!
YAAAA!
THONK


WHAT WAS THAT?!
WHAT? WHAT?
skrunk krunk
WHAT JUST FELL?
MAYBE IT'S THE APOCALYPSE.
K L N K
KLONG
...GOOD A WAY AS ANY...
FOR ME TO DISAPPEAR
HMM HM HEH.. HEH..
HAHAHAHAHA!!!
M-MAYBE IT'S SOME KIND OF COSMIC PRESENCE

NUMBER 41!!!
Kak Katter
HMMM..
!
KA-KANEDA...!
YEAH?
HEYY!!!
IT'S YOU GUYS!

IT WAS YOU WASN'T IT? YOU WERE GUIDING ME HERE!
JHN.
SHIT, IT'S THAT SKINHEAD AGAIN!
...UH..
I CAN DO WITHOUT ANY MORE OF HIM; LET'S GO!
NOT SO FAST


PLEASE ..
WON'T YOU AT LEAST TELL ME...
WHAT IS AKIRA ?!
HE'S ONE OF US... PART OF OUR SERIES.
HEY! BALDY'S WAKING UP! LET'S MOVE IT!
AKIRA IS NUMBER 28.

NEXT ISSUE: **STALKERS**

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Chaos reigns in the secret government project run by the Colonel in 21st Century Neo-Tokyo. Two prisoners—Kay, young agent of the underground resistance, and Kaneda, vengeance driven leader of a teenage motorcycle gang—are on the loose in his skyscraper headquarters. His special team of mutant children are plotting on their own against Tetsuo, delinquent become psychic-powered killer. Once the Colonel's hope as a check against the greatest threat of all—the sleeping paranormal giant, AKIRA—Tetsuo is proving wild and uncontrollable, bent on a test of psychic might with the children arrayed against him. As this showdown begins, Kaneda and Kay will be wild cards...perhaps in destroying Tetsuo, perhaps in driving him to even greater acts of violence.

KATSUHIRO OTOMO'S

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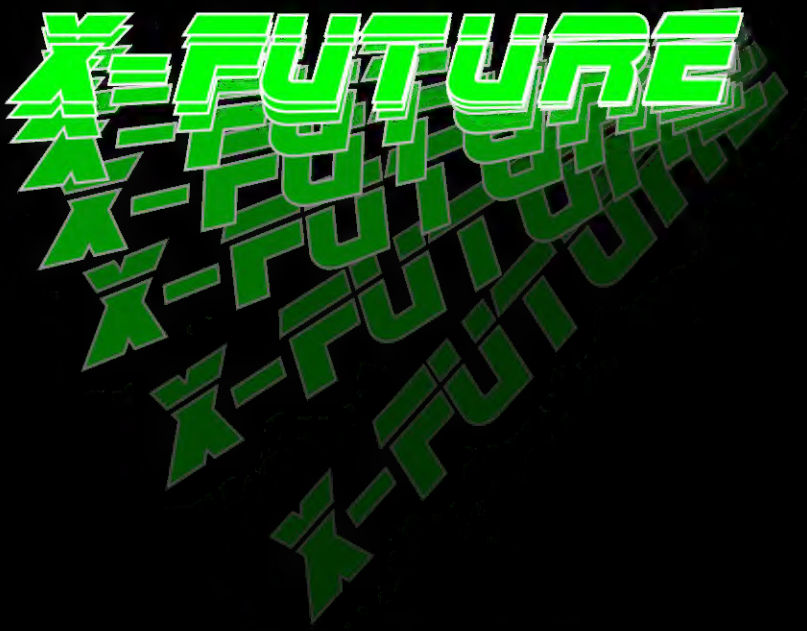

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